

Abiah Taylor House
East side of Brandywine Creek Road (LR 15103),
.1 mile south of Strasburg Road (State Route 162)
Copesville Vicinity (East Bradford Township)
Chester County
Pennsylvania

HABS No. PA-204

HABS

PA

IS - COPS.V.

2-

PHOTOGRAPHS

HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. PA-204

ABIAH TAYLOR HOUSE

Street Address or Location: On County Road #15103 just south of State Route #162, East Bradford Township, Chester County, Pa.

Present Owner: Thomas P. Harney, West Chester, Pa.

Brief Statement of Significance: This 1724 house, built by an English Quaker, retains some of the original design.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Original and subsequent owners: Abiah Taylor, who built this 1724 house, deeded it to his daughter and son-in-law, Jonathan Park and Deborah, his wife. Their son, Joseph Park, continued and in 1797 Abiah and Samuel Taylor, great-grandsons of the builder, purchased it. John and Sarah (Taylor) Bailly followed and then their nephew and his wife, Joel and Jane Scarlett. She sold the property in 1906 to Samuel H. Parke, who sold it to the present owner, Thomas P. Harney, in 1949.
2. Date of erection: 1724 - date stone in west wall
3. Architect, builder, suppliers, etc.: Unknown
4. Original plans, construction, etc.: Plan of the house little, if any, changed. The one chimney is in the north side of the house, and the cellar is only dug out to the south of the chimney foundations. At present there is a trap door from the north room to the basement, taking place of the original outside entrance, east side, which has been closed by the addition of a stone kitchen, eighteenth century. Pent eaves were on the south side and west front.
5. Notes on alterations and additions: The 1798 direct tax, Department of Internal Revenue, shows that the stone kitchen addition to the east, 18' by 21', was built in the eighteenth century. A door has been cut into the south wall, making an outside entrance there. The pent eaves have rotted off.
6. Important old views and references:
Views: J. Smith Futhey and Gilbert Cope: History of Chester County Pennsylvania, Philadelphia: Louis H. Everts, 1881, page 164. There are also numerous late nineteenth century onwards photographs in the Chester County Historical Society, West Chester, Pa.

References: Sources of information are all to be found in the Chester County Historical Society, West Chester, Pa., in classified printed and manuscript files under heading: East Bradford Township.Lands.

- B. Historical Events Connected with the Structure: Abiah Taylor was born in Didcott, Berkshire, England; he married Deborah Gearing of Farington meeting (Quaker) of the same county in 1694. He came to Pennsylvania and settled in East Bradford township, Chester county, Pennsylvania, in 1702. He built a mill within a few years, which continued to operate for nearly two centuries. His first house has entirely gone from view, but it is supposed to have been very near his 1724 brick house. The bricks were burnt on the place, a short distance south of the house.
- C. Likely Sources Not Yet Investigated: None known
- D. Supplemental Material: Direct quotations from the following -
 1. "Village Record," West Chester, Pa., February 9, 1831:

"PUBLIC SALE, OF REAL ESTATE.

"PURSUANT to an order of the Orphans' Court of Chester county, will be exposed to public sale, on the premises, on Tuesday, the 8th of March next, all that MESSUAGE, PLANTATION OR TRACT OF LAND, late the property of JOSEPH PARKE, deceased; situate in East Bradford township, Chester county, on the Philadelphia and Lancaster road, two miles from the borough of West Chester, (which it is now contemplated to connect with Philadelphia by a rail-road,) bounded by lands of Abiah Taylor, Emor Bradley, Ezra Cope, Imiah Hoopes, Benjamin Cope and others, containing 221 Acres more or less, the improvements are a brick house, brick barn and log stabling annexed, a stone waggon-house, stone spring house in which is an excellent spring of water. The farm is handsomely divided into convenient fields, all of which are surrounded by good and substantial fences, and almost all, having a southern exposure; the buildings situated in the middle. There are about 58 acres of good wood-land, principally hickory & black-oak. A valuable vein of Limestone runs through the farm, in which a quarry may with little difficulty be opened, and on the farm is a good lime-kiln. A fine stream of water, sufficient for water-works, passes the whole width of the tract, through it, which may be easily made to water 30 or 40 acres of fine meadow. The situation is very healthy, the neighborhood good, convenient to mills, schools, and places of worship, all of which concur to render it one of the handsomest farms in Ches. co. Persons wishing to purchase would do well to view this farm for themselves. They will be shown it by applying to either of the subscribers, the one living thereon, the other adjoining it.

"Sale to commence at 12 o'clock on said day, when attendance will be given by

"Ezra Cope,

"John Parke,

Adm'rs."

2. "Daily Local News," West Chester, Pa., January 20, 1883:

"A Relic. - Reuben John, of this borough, has shown us a piece of leaden window sash and glass taken from the little and old brick dwelling-house which stands near to the Strasburg Road and a short distance this side of Cope's Bridge, on the Brandywine. Relating to this relic Mr. John furnishes us with the following: 'This house was built in 1724. The bricks were made from clay procured a little way south of where the house stands. The house is located on a mound which is said to have been once a regular slope all around, but the road running on the west side disfigured it to some extent. The walls are yet sound and give promise of continuing to stand as long as the Egyptian pyramids if vandal hands will but permit them to do so. At the time of this building being ready for occupancy the family residing therein had their nearest neighbors at Dilworthtown, and of course they were on good terms. Why should they not be at such along distance apart? This house was built by Abiah Taylor, and the tract which he 'took up' remained in the name for a long time, but all are now gone, and it descended in title to the Baily Brothers. The mortar is almost as hard as the brick, and it is indeed a flinty sort of a structure. The windows on the west side were four in number. The north side had two, which were very small, and all had leaden sash. The eyesight of these people was good, hence no French-plate glass was used. The mound upon which the house stands I have heard was made by some people of a more ancient race, but this I am unable to say to a certainty. I have portions of the sash referred to, and it was brought from England. I am unable to ascertain the date of the Taylor's coming to this country, but I think it was about the year 1700. I have also a large oaken chest, which they brought with them and which contained all their wardrobe. It would not be large enough to supply the wants of a family in these times.' We may add that Mr. John is a descendant of the man who erected the house, of which he furnishes us the above scrap of local history."

Prepared by Bert Anderson - August 1958

Curator, Chester County Historical Society

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: This house has architectural interest because of its early date, 1724, and because some of the original design is preserved.

2. Condition of fabric: Fair

B. Technical Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: Two and one-half stories -
20' by 30'

2. Foundations: Stone
3. Wall construction: Brick
4. Porches: Porch on west front
5. Chimneys: Rebuilt
6. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: Original openings still present, with one additional door in the south wall.
 - b. Windows and shutters: Original openings, no shutters. On the south side a second-story window has been enlarged.
7. Roof:
 - a. Shape, covering: Steep pitch - wooden shingles.
 - b. Cornice, eaves: Returns on north and south sides gone; west front cornice replaced.
 - c. Dormers: None

C. Technical Description of Interiors:

1. Floor plans: The first floor consisted, and still does, of two rooms; the original cooking fireplace is in the north wall, with stairs to the left and a closet to its right - each with a very small window. On the second floor the large north bedroom had a small fireplace (now walled up) and two small ones in the south half. The old partitions have been replaced.
2. Stairways: The stairway, as described above, is still in the same position, but has been replaced.
3. Flooring: Only attic retains old floors.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Plaster
5. Doorways and doors: None left
6. Trim: Almost nothing original left
7. Hardware: Nothing original left
8. Lighting: None
9. Heating: Both original fireplaces have been closed.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: Situated on a mound, the house faces west.

2. Enclosures: None
3. Outbuildings: Spring house and barn
4. Walks: None
5. Landscaping: None

Prepared by Bart Anderson - August 1958

Curator, Chester County Historical Society